AIB 5 18011

TRANSMITTAL SLIP

27 September 1953
DATE

TO: File

BUILDING	ROOM NO.

REMARKS:

A In view of the attached report from [redacted] which reflects death of Dr. John Lane by cyanide and acetone which was swallowed by deceased, further investigation in connection with this problem was believed unnecessary.

[redacted] A

FROM:

BUILDING	ROOM NO.	EXTENSION

FORM NO. 36-8
SEP 1946

STANDARD FORM NO. 64

[redacted] A/B, 5, 180/2

Office Memorandum • UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

TO : Chief, Security Research Staff

DATE: 22 June 53

FROM : Chief, Special Security Division

SUBJECT: LANE, Dr. John - Information Concerning

14-BB [redacted]

1. Reference is made to a memorandum dated 29 May 1953 prepared by a member of your staff requesting information concerning the death of captioned subject.

2. A check of the subject's name against the records of the Security Office disclosed the existence of a clipping from the NEW YORK TIMES of 18 October 1952. This article is dated 17 October 1952 at New Brunswick, New Jersey, and relates that subject, 36 years of age, died on 17 October 1952 after swallowing poison while sitting in his parked automobile on the golf course at Rutgers University. Robert H. JAMISON, coroner, Middlesex County (New Jersey), said that the scientist's death had been caused by swallowing a mixture of cyanide and acetone. Captain Matthew J. LUND, Police Department (New Brunswick), initiated an investigation. The results of the investigation are not indicated.

3. The article of the NEW YORK TIMES further points out that the subject, a native of Santa Monica, California, studied at Heidelburg University, Germany, in 1937 and 1938 after graduation from the University of California. He was engaged in research work at Princeton University on the Manhattan Project in 1944 and 1945. In 1945 he joined the staff at Rutgers University and specialized in Theoretic Organic Chemistry and was noted for his work in connection with the atom bomb.

4. The article also indicates that the Subject was suffering from influenza prior to his death. His residence address is shown as 402 Lee Avenue (presumably New Brunswick).

5. In view of your request that this information be furnished to you prior to further action on the part of this division, no further inquiries are being made until so requested by you.

A [redacted]

[redacted]

A/B, 5, 180/3

Chief, Security Research Staff 29 May 1953

Chief, Technical Branch

Request for Information in the Death of Dr. John LANE of Rutgers University.

1. Either late in October or early in November 1952, Dr. John Lane of the Chemistry Department of Rutgers University committed suicide apparently by the internal use (intravenous injection) of a substance or substances which he had recently succeeded in isolating in his laboratory. Exact details of the substances are not known but the informant reported that the substance is found in some type of tropical herb and is known as "Ahizet".

2. Examination of botanical records, pharmaceutical directories, files, etc. fails to establish any substance known as "Ahizet" but this name may possibly be a local name or manufactured name used in the chemical laboratory at Rutgers University at the time of Dr. Lane's death. The informant in the case stated that he believed Dr. Lane's research was the subject of a publication in the last year and that there possibly would be some additional information in the newspaper accounts of his death.

3. The original paper in connection with the above death of Dr. Lane indicated that the cause of Dr. Lane's death was apparently a "traceless" poison. In an effort to secure full details in this connection, the writer contacted [redacted] case officer, [redacted] stated to the writer that he had no additional factual information to give but stated there were three men who could possibly help in the matter. He stated that [redacted] who has recently become associated with a branch of the [redacted] and who now resides in the [redacted], had given him the information on Dr. John Lane, whom he [redacted] know while at Princeton University.

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H-B16

[redacted] also referred the writer to [redacted] who very recently has become associated with the [redacted] stated that [redacted] was a friend of Dr. Lane's and could possibly give additional information in connection with Dr. Lane's death.

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H-B16

5. In addition to [redacted] stated that probably the best source of information on Dr. Lane would be [redacted] (phonetic), a top flight research chemist with the

H-B16

[redacted]

[redacted] A

[redacted] stated that [redacted] had told him that [redacted] was one of Dr. Lane's closest friends and was a classmate of Dr. Lane's at both Princeton and Heidelburg. H-B/6

6. In view of [redacted] expressed interest in a similar problem, it is suggested that this memorandum be referred by your office to the proper security division with the request that a very cautious investigation be conducted in an effort to secure if possible all available details in this connection. A

7. It is further suggested that the coroner's report at Rutgers (Brunswick, New Jersey), the statements of fellow instructors in the Chemistry Department at Rutgers and the newspaper files of the local papers might possibly indicate some clue as to what caused Dr. Lane's death. More specifically, this office would like to know what substances, plants, herbs, chemicals, etc. was Dr. Lane working on at the time of his suicide and why was the poison described as "tracology".

A [redacted]

[redacted] A10,5,180/4

Office Memorandum • UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

TO: Chief, Security Research Staff DATE: 16 April 1953

FROM: Chief, Technical Branch

SUBJECT: Request for Information in the Death of Dr. John Lane of Rutgers University.

1. Either late in October or early in November 1952, Dr. John Lane of the Chemistry Department of Rutgers University committed suicide apparently by the internal use of a substance or substances which he had recently succeeded in isolating in his laboratory. Exact details of the substances are not known but the informant reported that the substance is found in some type of tropical herb and is known as "Anizet".

2. Examination of botanical records, pharmaceutical directories, files, etc. fails to establish any substance known as "Anizet" but this name may possibly be a local name or manufactured name used in the chemical laboratory at Rutgers University at the time of Dr. Lane's death. The informant in the case stated that he believed Dr. Lane's research was the subject of a publication in the last year and that there possibly would be some additional information in the newspaper accounts of his death.

3. The original paper as seen by the writer indicated in a heading that the cause of Dr. Lane's death was apparently a traceless poison. This original memorandum which was prepared by [redacted] A
of [redacted] ets out the above information. A check of OSI's personnel records indicates that [redacted] is now on leave and will not return until 11 May 1953.

4. In view of [redacted] expressed interest in a similar A
problem, it is suggested that this memorandum be referred by your Office to the proper Security Office with the request that a very cautious investigation be conducted in an effort to secure if possible all available details in this connection.

5. It is further suggested that the coroner's report at Rutgers, the statements of fellow instructors in the Chemistry Department at Rutgers and the newspaper files of the local papers might possibly indicate some clue as to what caused Dr. Lane's death. More specifically, this Office would like to know what substances, plants, herbs, chemicals, etc. was Dr. Lane working on at the time of his apparent suicide and why was the poison described as "TRACELESS".

A [redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

AB 5, 180/5

A

17 November 1952

TRACELESS ← appears in my mail document

Tasteless Poison

1. The following incidental information which I picked up this last week-end may possibly be relevant to the subject.

2. I am informed that Dr. John Lane of the Chemistry Department, Rutgers University, committed suicide within the last three weeks by the internal use of a substance which he had recently succeeded in isolating at his laboratory. I understand that the substance is found in some type of tropical herb and is known as Anizet.

3. My informant believes that Dr. Lane's research was the subject of publication in the last year and that there may be some additional information in the newspaper accounts of his death.

[redacted]

A

OSI/[redacted]

Distribution:
Orig and 1 - Forward
1 - [redacted] (Chemistry)
1 - Daily reading file
1 - Subject file
1 - Chrono

[redacted]